

IN THE CLAIMS:

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1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Original) A method for distributing web content objects efficiently across a network of information processing units and intermediate nodes, the method on an intermediate node comprising the steps of:

receiving a multicast packet;

determining one or more "next hops" that the packet should be forwarded to; and

forwarding one copy of the packet to each of the "next hops".

9. (Original) The method as defined in claim 8, wherein the determining and forwarding steps use a Small Group Multicast scheme.

10. (Original) The method as defined in claim 8, further comprising the step of:

repetitively executing the determining and forwarding steps for a plurality of one or more packets.

11. (Original) The method as defined in claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

processing ACKs and/or NAKs; and

performing packet retransmissions.

12. (Original) The method as defined in claim 8, wherein the packet comprises a small group multicast packet.

13. (Original) A computer readable medium including instructions for distributing web content objects efficiently across a network of information processing units and intermediate nodes, the computer readable medium comprising instructions for:

receiving a packet containing address information for a set of destinations;  
determining the "next hops" for those destinations; and  
replicating the packet for each "next hop".

14. (Original) The computer readable medium as defined in claim 13, further comprising the instruction for:

forwarding a copy of the packet to each "next hop".

15. (Original) The computer readable medium as defined in claim 14, further comprising the instructions for:

repetitively executing the determining, replicating and forwarding steps for each newly received packet.

16. (Original) The computer readable medium as defined in claim 13, further comprising the instructions for:

processing ACKs and/or NAKs; and  
performing packet retransmissions.

17. (Original) An intermediate node for distributing web content objects efficiently across a network of information processing units and intermediate nodes, the intermediate node comprising:

a reception unit for receiving a packet containing address information for a set of destinations;

a determination unit for determining a "next hop" for each of the destinations; and

a copying unit for replicating the packet for each of the "next hops".

18. (Original) The intermediate node as defined in claim 17, further comprising:  
a forwarding unit for forwarding a copy of the packet to each of the "next hops".
19. (Original) The intermediate node as defined in claim 18, further comprising:  
a repeater unit for repetitively executing the determining, replicating and forwarding for a plurality of multicast packets.
20. (Original) The intermediate node as defined in claim 19, further comprising:  
an acknowledge unit for processing ACKs and/or NAKs; and  
a retransmit unit for handling packet retransmissions.
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